

Speaker Pro Tem Jeff Morris

Keeping Aerospace Jobs in Washington

I chaired the bipartisan task force created in 2003 to keep the Boeing 787 Dreamliner manufacturing in Washington State. That previous task force recognized taxing, land use, and transportation issues that needed to be corrected, which ultimately led to the Boeing Company's choice of the Everett plant as the facility to build the new airliner. Since then the 787 has become the most successful launch of a new commercial airplane in Boeing's history.

Washington State is home to the largest concentration of aerospace workers in the world with over 100,000 skilled workers and hundreds of companies producing over \$36 billion in business activity. Many of those workers live in the 40th District and commute to Everett.

In an effort to keep Washington at the forefront of the world's aerospace industry, I have agreed to chair a rejuvenated effort in looking at our competitiveness in the aerospace sector protection our previous investments. Our mission is to ensure the continued competitiveness of the state's aviation and aerospace clusters.



Are you a student interested in state government? Come spend a week at the capital as a page

Becoming a page for a week at the capital presents students with a unique educational opportunity to participate in the legislative process. Students in this program are responsible for a wide variety of tasks including distributing bills and amendments to legislative members on the House or Senate floor to performing ceremonial tasks such as presenting the flags before the day's legislative session. Students or parents interested in the page program should contact my office or visit the Page Program homepage at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/House/PageInternProgram/>

If you'd like a presentation to your group on microchip spy technology or what your energy future will look like in 2025, please contact my office at: 360-786-7970 or email me at: morris.jeff@leg.wa.gov

REPORT
SESSION
2008



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WA STATE DEPT
OF PRINTING 98501

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2008 SESSION REPORT



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Dear Neighbors,

The 2008 sixty-day session has come to an end, and I believe the results will impact our region in many positive ways. This year we continued to build on significant investments made the past several years in creating jobs and expanding educational opportunities. After years of being a critic of Washington State Ferry Management practices a series of mis-haps finally created the legislative will to actively oversee the Washington State Ferry System. While I was accused of micro-managing the system, I think we can see the results of poor oversight and "expert opinion" that is not accountable to voters.

I worked on several bills this session that have become law. Several were in the area of consumer protection and new technologies. Sen. Spanel, Rep. Quall, and I were able to pull off a difficult task in getting relief to the Skagit County Agriculture community in an out of the blue tax assessment they were hit with. Local dairy farmers shared with us their problems the week before session started. We were then able to get a bill drafted, passed through the Senate and House and to the Governor for signing, all within 60 days.

While national headlines should make us all nervous, Washington's economy continues to outpace that of most other states. The rest of the national economic woes are slowing our economy down as I write this, but we are still growing. We're by no means recession-proof here, but we are certainly beating the odds thanks to smart investments.

I often like to think of the state's budget as a home: When there's a storm on the horizon, you don't just sit back and hope your home survives it, you go to the hardware store and buy the tools that will help protect it.

Our investments, combined with cutting-edge industries and an attractive quality of life, draw thousands of new residents to the state each year. With so many new people comes a greater demand on our resources and infrastructure. These are the problems of prosperity.

The 2008 session will help us weather our economic times with smart investments and a sound budget – we're saving over \$800 million in reserves to make see us through the storm. In this newsletter, I'll talk about some of the other ways we're helping Washington and the North Sound communities remain a national leader in smart investments for our future.

Thanks again for the privilege of serving you,

Jeff Morris

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Protecting Consumers in the New Technology Age

After two years of research and two years of working a legislative bill, I was finally successful in passing the nation's first law prohibiting spying on you using microchips contained in everyday products from passports and credit cards to groceries, clothing, and consumer products for malicious intent.

Known as "skimming," criminals could potentially use a device to steal identities or target houses for burglary by collecting data transmitted by driver's licenses, credit cards, or perhaps even the new TV in one's living room carrying one of these chips. The new law makes it a Class C felony to intentionally scan another person's identification remotely without his or her knowledge and consent, for the purpose of fraud, identity theft, or some other illegal purpose.

The other major piece of the bill did not pass the State Senate. It provided that before a business could slip you a chip to collect marketing information on you that you had to opt-in to that relationship. Because much of consumer commerce law is built around "Buyer Beware," it is important that consumers can be aware of where this hidden technology exists to be able to choose which business relationship they enjoy.

Every major retailer and the wireless industry fought this basic right.

Wireless companies like AT&T Wireless, Verizon, T-Mobile and Sprint, credit card companies like VISA and American Express, and retailers like Wal-Mart all vigorously fought for their right to slip you an RFID chip to spy on you without your knowledge.

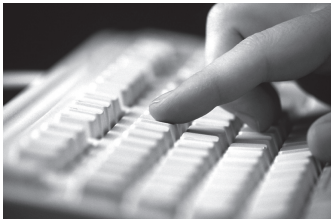
I plan to continue building on the law next year, by making it illegal for businesses to collect your data without first gaining your consent.



Spyware Crackdown

The Governor has also approved a new law I sponsored this year that updates the landmark spyware law I passed in 2006. Washington's spyware law has been called the best in the nation and used in court to stop spyware on consumer home computers.

As spyware technology has evolved and loopholes in the law were exploited, legislators realized it was necessary to update the law to keep up. This legislation will help bring more prosecutions that are successful against spyware creators and users and protect our residents from identity theft more effectively than the previous law.



Stem Cord Blood Banking

Every day it seems there's another announcement of the literal miracles of what can be done with stem cord blood to cure illnesses later in life. The process of collecting and storing stem cord blood is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for parents.

Unfortunately, finding the right enterprise for this is a bit like the Wild West; there seem to be no rules and the cost can be very expensive. If you were collecting your child's stem cord blood today, you face on average a \$2000 fee and yearly fee of \$100 per year to store the stem cells. Many of the companies that offer this service never test the collection before they store it.

I can't imagine paying this money and paying for storage for decades, and then when you actually might need this resource for your child, finding out that the collection was not good.

The new law provides that private storage services have to access the viability of storing the collection before charging for the yearly storage and giving the consumer the chance of having their deposit refunded if the collection is not suitable for storage. Also it will allow our department of health provide information to new parents on the many public stem cord blood registries like Puget Sound Blood bank that also provide this service at no fee.

Skagit County Agriculture

After meeting with local farmers, I along with my seatmates, Sen. Harriet Spanel and Rep. Dave Quall, introduced legislation to level the playing field for our local dairies. A fee to mitigate any discharges from farms that affect water quality issues for shellfish populations has unfairly targeted them.

The issue is that many of our smaller dairy farms are already meeting higher environmental standards, yet this fee is still being imposed. The local dairies that have committed themselves to higher environmental standards than the national standards should receive the same tax breaks as the bigger operations.

Working collaboratively as the 40th District delegation, we were able to get this issue – which was unheard the week before session started – resolved by passing an exemption into law.

SONICS

The issue of state funding for a new arena for the Sonics came up the last week of the session. I opposed taking up the issue at the last minute and running a new law through that did not give the public (you) the right to make your voice heard.

The issue created a split in our local delegation. Republican leadership wanted us to take an old bill title lying around and put the latest Sonic arena proposal to a last minute vote in the legislature.

Luckily, subverting the public process did not occur and we can now take a reasonable look at the proposal. If you have an opinion on the public backing of a refurbished Sonics arena, please let me know.

In light of recent evidence, I don't believe they had any intention of remaining in Seattle and did not act in good faith to keep the team here. However, your guidance will dictate whether I support or oppose this issue if an arena proposal comes forward for another NBA team, now that the question of running a "midnight bill" in the last days of session has been put down.

Overhauling the Ferry System

For years now, I have pushed for an overhaul of the ferry system in Washington, to ensure a safe, affordable, and reliable service for our Sound commuters and residents. While I was accused of micro-managing the system, I think we can see the results of poor oversight and "expert opinion" that is not accountable to voters.

In 2006, I led the effort to conduct a comprehensive ferry finance study, which has already produced significant savings to help replace the steel electric vessels. **Thanks to those savings, we were able to freeze ferry fares last year and I am happy to report there will be no annual increase this year.**

We also took another hard look at the system itself, from top to bottom. Ferry reform must start with a major management overhaul and strict new accountability measures.

In order to meet the long-term challenges necessary to keep the nation's largest ferry system viable and affordable, we adopted a five-point plan that includes:

Controlling Costs – our final budget cuts the unnecessary overhead at WSF

Reforming WSF Management – ferry management must reprioritize service as its number one concern, and eliminate unnecessary expenses and duplicated efforts to ensure we finance an efficient ferry system

Focusing on Service and Safety – funding is tight, resources should focus on providing safe and reliable service, not expanding terminals and other extras

Building for the Future – future budgets should reflect long-term vessel replacement and terminal preservation priorities to avoid continually reacting to emergencies

Accountability – oversight measures are now in place to ensure the ferry system focuses on service, cost control, management, and orderly planning for the future

New Boats – I also made sure funding for up to six new vessels was included in the Supplemental Transportation budget, including \$85 million for construction of three 100-car vessels to replace the four steel electric boats pulled out of service last year and \$283 million for three 144-car vessels whose construction has been delayed for four years.

